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THE EXISTING MEMBERS' PARTICIPATION IN JANTEKEL DAIRY COOPERATIVES UNION, NORTH GONDAR, ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

Organizing farmers through dairy co-operatives can have many advantages over individual farming. First, co-operatives can facilitate access to market information; reduce costs of marketing and increase producers' access to technology, extension and related services. Second, dairy marketing co-operatives can help to decrease transaction costs, price risks, and enhance bargaining power of dairy producers. But, there are some limitations to get those advantages. So, this paper will find out the solution for the above problems. The main objective of this study is to assess the existing members Participation of Jantekel Dairy cooperatives union. All of the General assembly members were selected as sample respondents of the study. Both qualitative and quantitative data and primary and secondary sources were used in the study. Moreover, the important statistical measures that were used to summarize and categorize the data are means, percentages, frequencies, standard deviations, chi-square and T-test. The result of the study indicated that the majority of the members of General assembly were not participating in the union's democratic matter and business activities.

Keywords: *members' participation, Dairy Cooperatives Union, Democratic matter, business activities*

1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Organizing farmers through dairy co-operatives can have many advantages over individual farming. First, co-operatives can improve or facilitate access to market information, reduce costs of marketing and can increase producers' access to technology, extension and related services, and thereby enhance efficiency in the process of production and marketing of dairy. Second, dairy marketing co-operatives can help to decrease transaction costs and price risks, and enhance bargaining power of dairy producers. These lead to increased return from commercial dairying which, in turn, stimulates innovation in the sector (Beekman, 2007).

It could be argued that members securing satisfactory services from their cooperatives through effective participation in cooperative affairs on their own need a number of efforts in the years to come. For instance, the participation of members in the general assembly meeting is poor everywhere even in advanced countries the attendance and participation used to be very low (Nakkiran, 2002). Absenteeism of members in the general body meeting may lead to the loss of democratic character that may result in dominance of the vested interest (Vera kumara, 2005).

The overall objective of the union is to alleviate members' milk marketing problem and increase their income generated from the milk and milk by products. The ancillary objectives include: Availing feed at reasonable price to members, Maximizing the income obtained from the livestock sub sector by promoting milk processing industries, and Offering pasteurized and high hygienic milk and milk by products to client consumers at reasonable prices (JDCU by-law, 2010).

But, there are limitations to perform the above objectives. Among them, there is occasional members' participation in the supply of milk and democratic matters of the union, unnecessary competition between union and affiliated members. Besides, poor overall coordination between the union and its affiliated primary dairy cooperatives are few of the missing parts in the efficient operation of the union. Furthermore, there is no a research which is conducted in this research title. So, this study will find out the causal agents and appropriate solution for the above problems by focusing on factors that are affecting members' participation in Jantekel dairy cooperatives union (JDCU).

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Jantekel dairy cooperatives union has been established in 2007 with 8 affiliated primary dairy cooperatives of Gondar town, wogera, layarmachho, Gondar zuria, Denbia and chilga woredas with the direct assistance of the terminated integrated livestock development project (ILDO). These affiliated primary cooperatives have been comprised about 233 members of whom 26 are women at the start and now reached 334 members of which 279 is male and 55 is female. The union has been started its operation by a share capital of Birr 22,500.00 contributed from eight member primary dairy cooperatives after the complete transfer of ownership of the milk processing unit together with nine rooms building from ILDP to the

union. Currently, the union over all assets value is reached to Birr 1,010,058.91 of which Birr 750,102.16 is obtained sources as a grant. The major portion of its asset is the milk processing machine and the building of its depreciation is contributed for the loss of the union turnover (NGZAO, 2013).

Table 1: Affiliated members of the union

No	District which the affiliated members found	Affiliated members	Number of members		
			Male	Female	Total
1	Chilga	Abebech Seraqo	30	5	35
2	Wogera	Mariseg	31	7	38
3	Lay Armachiho	Alemgenet	55	5	60
		Enesera-Behibret	31	7	38
4	Gondar town	Tadila-Dibabo	43	4	47
		Arebaba	37	10	47
5	Gondar Zuria	Meseret	16	11	27
6	Denbia	Edeget-Behibret	36	6	42
	Total		279	55	334

Source: North Gondar cooperative promotion office (2015)

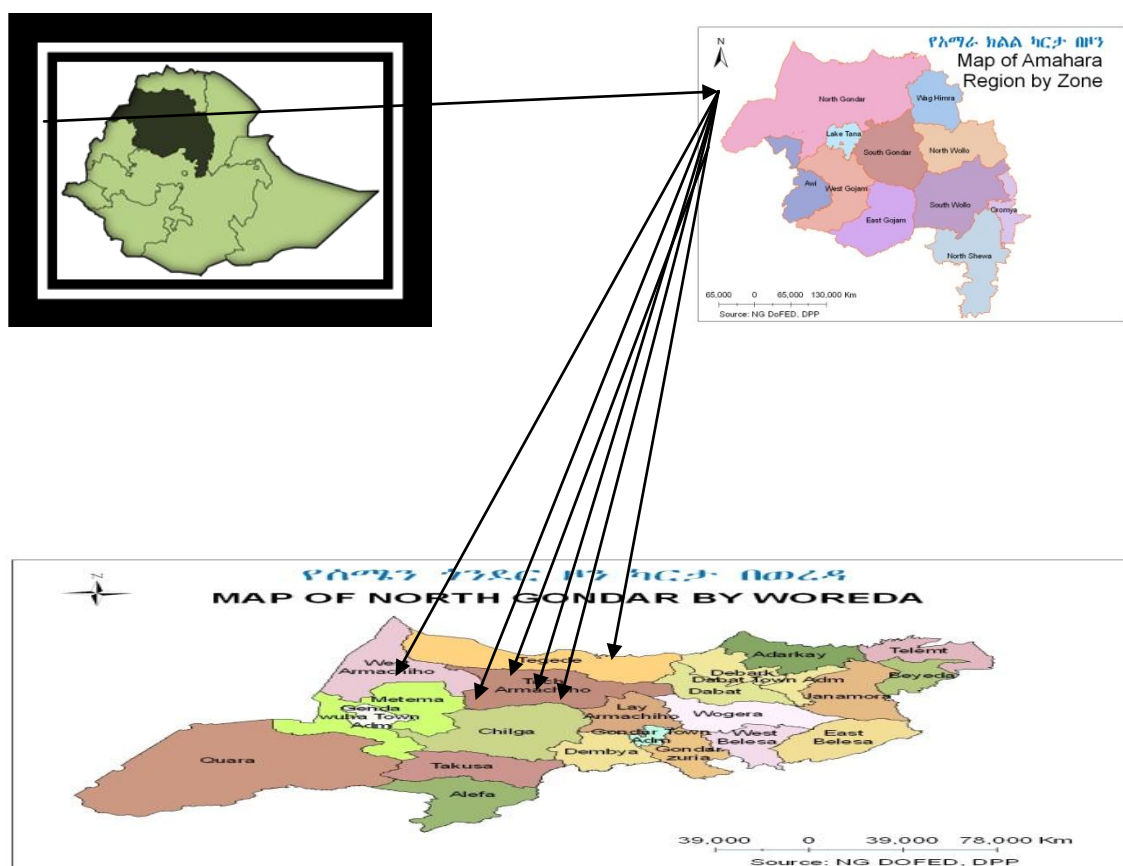


Fig. 1 Map of the study area

RESEARCH DESIGN

The design of the study was mixed research type (qualitative and quantitative) based on various data collection methods. With respect to the objectives and nature of the research questions of the study both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were employed. The research was conducted in Jantekel dairy cooperatives union. The union was selected purposively among 8 cooperative unions found in north Gondar Administrative Zone, The criteria for selection was, there is serious problem of participating of affiliated member cooperatives with its union when we compared to other unions found in the Zone and there was no any research conducted specifically in the union and generally in the zone regarding to this title.

POPULATION, SAMPLING TECHNIQUE AND SIZE

In Jantekel dairy cooperatives union, there are 8 affiliated member cooperative societies in six Districts. The total number of members of affiliated cooperative societies was 334. Each member cooperative society had four representatives for the general assembly of the union. The total number of the general assembly members of the union was 32. So, all of the GA members were selected as a sample population and Sample respondents of the study. Among the representatives of each affiliated member cooperative societies, 3 were from its management committee and 1 was selected member from its GA members. As mentioned above, the union had 32 general assembly members taken from its 8 member dairy cooperative societies. So, all 32 union general assembly members have selected as sample respondents for the study.

Table 2: Sample size of the respondents

No	Name of the union	Number of GA members of the union			Sample respondents		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	Jantekel Daity cooperatives Union	21	7	32	21	7	32
	Total	21	7	32	21	7	32

Source: North Gondar Zone and Gondar Town coop promotion Office (2015)

DATA TYPES, SOURCES AND COLLECTING METHODS

Both qualitative and quantitative data was used in the study. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected from focus group discussion, key informants interview and responses obtained from sample respondents. Hence, general assembly members, board of directors, control committees, employees of the union and cooperative officials at district and zonal levels were the sources of primary data. The questionnaires were focused on institutional Factors, technical Factors,

Member Factors, Economical Factors, general working mechanisms and other related aspects of the societies.

Secondary data was collected from the union monthly, quarterly and annual report, minutes, audit reports. Moreover, it was collected from Woredas cooperative promotion office and zonal cooperative promotion office. In addition other reliable sources such as published and unpublished materials (documents) were used as a secondary source of data. Qualitative data was used for the sake of triangulation on data collected from member respondents, 2 FGD were conducted among 12 members of union through interview guide check list. Moreover key informant interviews (KIs) were employed with 3 Woredas cooperative promoters, 3 zonal cooperative promoters and 2 union employees through interview guide check list. The researcher used the five point likert scale for collecting the qualitative data. These scales always ask people to indicate how much they agree or disagree, approve or disapprove, believe to be true or false and so on.

Regarding to quantitative data, the primary quantitative data was collected from the respondents using a pre- tested, semi-structured interview schedule. This interview schedule for primary data included open-ended and closed-ended questions. Secondary quantitative data was collected through reviewing documents, such as, reports and documents of the societies, Woredas and zonal cooperative offices. Pre-testing of structured interview schedule was done with 8 non-sample respondents for 3 days before formal data collection, to check its clarity and freeness of ambiguity. To make the communication easier during collection of data from the respondent member, semi-structured interview schedule was translated into local language of the respondents called Amharic.

Four enumerators who can speak the local language were recruited and trained about the data collection techniques for 3 days. They practiced how data will be collected from respondents along with pre-testing of semi-structured interview schedule. Continuous supervision was conducted by the researchers to reduce errors during data collection, to correct possible errors right on the spot and for the sake of maintaining the validity and reliability of the data.

DATA ANALYSIS

Following the completion of the data collection, the data was coded and entered in to Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 20) computer program for analysis. Qualitative data was analyzed by using different qualitative statistical procedures and methods. Descriptive tools were supplemented by qualitative analytical methods (mainly for those data acquired through the participatory/ qualitative methods) like interpretation and explanation of various opinions, views and concepts; and summarizing, categorizing, and presentation of these in convenient forms. The Descriptive statistical tools were used to analyze the quantitative data. The important statistical measures that were used to summarize and categorize the data are means, percentages, frequencies, standard deviations, chi-square and T-test.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results of focused group discussion, key informant interview and survey were presented and discussed. The descriptive analyses were done to describe the existing members' participation of democratic matters and business activities of the union. The significance of the result was tested by using Chi-square and T -test.

3.1 Demographic characteristics of members' respondents

3.1.1 Distribution of the respondents by age group

It is the number of completed years of the respondents from the time of birth till the time of the survey conducted. As table 5 below shows, the average age of the union General assembly member respondents was 46.36 years with a standard deviation of 8.595. The minimum and maximum age of them was 33 and 66 respectively. the T-value of the age of union general assembly members was 0.275 which is not significant at 1%, %5 and 10% probability level and has no an association with the dependent variable.

Table 5: Age of the respondents

Variable	Statistics	Union General Assembly Members (N = 32)	T-Test
Age	Mean	46.36	0.275
	Standard deviation	8.595	
	Maximum	66	
	Minimum	33	

Source: own survey, (2015)

4.1.2 DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS BY SEX AND MARITAL STATUS

As table 6 below indicates, it was found that from the total respondents of the total union's General assembly members of the respondents about 84.4% were males and the rest 15.6% were female This implies the majority of the general assembly members of the union were male and the involvement of females was very less.

The result of the conducted survey shows, from the total union's General assembly members of the respondents 84.4% were married, 6.25% were unmarried, 3.1% were divorced and the rest 6.25% were widowed. This implies that the vast majority of respondents were married.

Table 6: Respondents' sex and marital status

Variable	Statistics	General Assembly Members of Union (N = 32)	
		F	%
Sex	Male	27	84.40
	Female	5	15.60
	Total	32	100
Marital status	Married	27	84.40

	Single	2	6.25
	Divorced	1	3.10
	Widowed	2	6.25
	Total	32	100

Source: own survey, (2015)

4.1.3 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY RELIGION AND OCCUPATION:

With regarding to Religion, as table 7 below shows, all of the union GA members were followers of Orthodox. This implies that all of the union's general assembly member respondents were the followers of Orthodox.

Concerning occupation, from table 7 below shows that among the total union's General assembly member respondents, about 87.50% were engaged in agriculture, 3.13% was engaged in trade, 6.24% were engaged in both trade and agriculture and the rest 3.13% were engaged in other activities for a living. The result shows, the vast majority of the respondents were engaged in the field of agriculture.

Table 7: Distribution of the respondents by religion and occupation

Variable	Statistics	Union General Assembly Members (N = 32)	
		F	%
Religion	Orthodox	32	100
	Muslim	0	0
	Catholic	0	0
	Total	32	100
Occupation	Agriculture	28	87.5
	Trade	1	3.13
	agriculture and trade	2	6.24
	Others	1	3.13
	Total	32	100.0

Source: own survey, (2015)

4.1.4 DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS BY FAMILY SIZE AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Family size is the number of family members of the respondents (i.e. Family number of members of general assembly of the union). Table 8 shows that among the total number of union's general assembly member respondents, 15.63%, 78.12% and 6.25% had 1-4, 5-8 and 9-12 family members respectively.

As to table 8 below also show, it was found that from the total respondents of union general assembly members, 18.75% couldn't read and write, 15.62% could read and write, 34.38% of them were in between grade 1-4, 21.87% were in between 5-8 and the rest 9.38% of them were found in between grade 9-12. This implies the majority of the respondents can write and read. The Chi-square value of the educational

level of union general assembly members was 0.736 which is not significant at 1%, %5 and 10% probability level and has no an association with the dependent variable.

Table 8: Respondents Educational level and Family size

Variable	Statistics	General Assembly Members of Union (N = 32)	
		F	%
Family size	1-4	5	15.63
	5-8	25	78.12
	9-12	2	6.25
	Total	32	100
Educational level	not read and write	6	18.75
	read and write	5	15.62
	1-4	11	34.38
	5-8	7	21.87
	9-12	3	9.38
	Total	32	100
	Chi-square value	0.736	

Source: own survey, (2015)

4.2 THE EXISTING MEMBERS PARTICIPATION

Union General assembly members must participate in their cooperative societies in relation to the Democratic Matters and Business activities.

4.2.1 MEMBERS PARTICIPATION IN ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND EMERGENCY MEETING

In every cooperative society, it is expected from all members to participate actively in the general assembly meeting to approve the annual plan and budget, to elect and dismiss different committees of the society, to amend the by-laws and internal regulation, to approve the audit report and so on. As table 9 depicts, among the total union General assembly member respondents, 31.25% of them were participated regularly whereas 31.25% of them were participated some times and the rest 37.5% of them were participated rarely. This implies that the majority of the respondents were not regularly participant in their cooperative society.

When we come to their participation in emergency meeting, the result of table 9 shows that from total union General assembly member respondents, 25% of them were participated regularly, 34.37% of them were participated some times and the rest 40.63% of them were participated rarely. This implies that the majority of the respondents were not participated regularly in their cooperative society's emergency meetings.

Table 9: Member participation in Annual general assembly and Emergency meeting

Variable	Statistics	General Assembly Members of Union (N = 32)	
		F	%
Members Participation in GA meeting	Regularly	10	31.25
	Some times	10	31.25
	Rarely	12	37.5
	Total	32	100
Members Participation in Emergency meeting	Regularly	8	25
	Some times	11	34.37
	Rarely	13	40.63
	Total	32	100

Source: own survey, (2015)

4.2.2 MEMBERS PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING AND ELECTION OF COMMITTEES

All cooperative members have to participate actively in their decision making and election of different committees of the society. There are different types of decisions which must be decided by the general assembly members, board/management committees before go in to practice. So, all members must actively participate in each decisions of the society to be more effective. During the election of committees, nomination, casting and give voice is expected from each members of the cooperative society.

As table 10 depicts, among the total union General assembly member respondents, 31.25% of them were participated regularly whereas 34.375% of them were participated some times and the rest 34.375% of them were participated rarely. This implies that the majority of the respondents were not regularly participated in the decision of their cooperative society. When we come to their participation in election of different committees, the result of table 10 shows that from total union General assembly member respondents, 37.5% of them were regularly participated whereas 25% of them were participated some times and the rest 37.5% of them were participated rarely. This implies that the majority of the respondents were not regularly participated in their committee election of cooperative society.

Table 10: Member participation in Decision making and Election of committees

Variable	Statistics	General Assembly Members of Union (N = 32)	
		F	%
Members Participation in Decision making	Regularly	10	31.25
	Some times	11	34.375
	Rarely	11	34.375
	Total	32	100
Members Participation in committee	Regularly	12	37.5

election	Some times	8	25
	Rarely	12	37.5
	Total	32	100

Source: own survey, (2015)

4.2.3 MEMBERS PARTICIPATION IN ELECTION OF BOARDS/MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Vigilant boards/management committees are the mandatory for cooperative societies to run their business effectively and efficiently. So, to elect those vigilant committees, active participation from all members is expected. All cooperative members have to participate actively in casting of the committee members during election. As table 11 depicts, among the total union General assembly member respondents, 40.625% of them were regularly participated whereas 28.125% were participated some times and the rest 31.25% of them were participated rarely. This implies that the majority of the respondents were not regularly participated in casting of board/committee election of their cooperative society.

Table 11: Member participation in casting of board/committees

Variable	Statistics	General Assembly Members of Union (N = 32)	
		F	%
Members Participation in casting committees	Regularly	13	40.625
	Some times	9	28.125
	Rarely	10	31.25
	Total	32	100.0

Source: own survey, (2015)

4.2.4 MEMBERS PARTICIPATION IN BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

Table 12 below indicates that among the total union general assembly member, 34.375% of them were participated regularly, 28.125% of them were participated some times and the rest of 37.50% of the respondents were participated rarely. The FGD and KIs result was supported the survey result; as they responded members' participation in business activities of the union were not regular participant.

Table 12: members' participation in business activities

Variable	Statistics	General Assembly Members of Union (N = 32)	
		F	%
Members Participation in Business activities	Regularly	11	34.375
	Some times	9	28.125
	Rarely	12	37.50
	Total	32	100

Source: own survey, (2015)

4.2.4.1 TYPES OF BUSINESS PARTICIPATION BY THE MEMBERS

The members of the cooperative society must be participated by buying additional share, providing raw milk, attracting new members, keeping the common properties of their society and so on. But the result of study from table 13 below reveals that from the total union general assembly member respondents, 28.125% of them were participated by buying additional share, 50% were participated by provision of raw milk, 6.25% were participated by attracting new members and the rest 15.625% of them didn't participate at all within two years. The FGD and KIs result was supported the survey result; as they responded, members' participation in all business activities of the union were not that much significant.

Table 13: Types of business activities which members participate

Variable	Statistics	General Assembly of the Union (N = 32)	
		F	%
Types of Participation in Business activities	buying additional share	9	28.125
	Provision of raw milk	16	50
	bringing new members	2	6.25
	no participation	5	15.625
	Total	32	100

Source: own survey, (2015)

4.2.4.2 RATE OF MEMBERS' PARTICIPATION IN BUSINESS CONTRIBUTION AND SURPLUS ALLOCATION

The members must contribute equitably to, and democratically control the capital of the cooperative and allocate the surplus for different purposes. But the result of study from table 14 below shows that from the total union general assembly members, 28.125% of them had high participation, 31.25% of them had medium participation, 15.625% were participated in lower rate and the rest 25% of them didn't participate at all within two years. The FGD and KIs result was supported the survey result; as they responded members' participation in business contribution and surplus allocation was not as expected from each member.

Table 14: Rate of participation in business contribution and surplus allocation

Variable	Statistics	General Assembly of the Union (N = 32)	
		F	%
Rate of Participation in Business contribution and surplus allocation	High	9	28.125
	Medium	10	31.25
	Low	5	15.625
	no participation	8	25
	Total	32	100

Source: own survey, (2015)

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

Dairy cooperatives union has to perform diversified activities to satisfy their member cooperative societies' needs and aspirations. So, to perform those diversified activities, active participation of members in their democratic rights and business activities is a mandatory and must be taken under consideration.

When we see the existing members' participation, the study revealed that there was no active participation of general assembly members in general assembly meeting, emergency meeting, decision making, election and business activities. Because below 35% of the members were participate regularly and the rest above 65% of the members were participating occasionally and rarely. In general, the majority of the members didn't participate in their cooperative society's general assembly meeting, decisions making, business activities and election of committee members regularly.

5.2 Recommendation

There should be active participation of members in their democratic rights and business activities. So, active participation is a mandatory and must be taken under consideration.

When we see the existing members' participation, the study revealed that member's participation in general assembly meeting, emergency meeting, decision making, election and business activities was not active. The majority of the union general assembly members were not actively/regularly participated. So, the concerned bodies including the union have to see different mechanisms/strategies to make the members active/regular participant in their cooperative society.

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